

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)
(ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2017**

**FORMAL SCREENING REQUEST FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
'SCREENING' UNDER PART 2 REGULATION 6**

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Erection of a two-storey extension to form changing rooms, cafe facilities, flexible club/social/training rooms and an extension to the existing gym space following the demolition of the existing changing block building; together with the creation of two 3G artificial football turf pitches, associated floodlighting and fencing; a 67no. space car park and an additional 60 space overflow car park; and associated landscaping

**AT: Hough End Leisure Centre And Playing Fields, 480 Princess Road,
Manchester, M20 1NA**

SCREENING OPINION ADOPTED BY MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

In coming to a formal opinion on whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required to support the proposed development, Manchester City Council, as Local Planning Authority, has taken into account the information submitted to accompany planning application reference 132513/VO/2021 together with the amended information submitted by the applicant as part of the planning application process.

The EIA Screening process is used to determine whether the proposed development is likely to have any significant effects on the environment.

The proposal type is listed in category 10 (b) 'Urban Development Projects' of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) Regulations 2017. It is indicated that consideration should be given by the local planning authority to potential significant effects on the environment where:

- (i) The development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development; or*
- (ii) the development includes more than 150 dwellings; or*
- (iii) the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares*

The submitted application form indicates that the proposal would result in 1464 sqm of additional gross internal floorspace and the site size (3.08 ha) does not exceed the thresholds in part ii) and iii) within Schedule 2. It is also noted that the Planning Policy

Guidance (PPG) accepts that only a small proportion of schedule 2 developments will require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Within the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), general considerations relating to the need for an EIA for Schedule 2 developments is identified within paragraph 18 of the guidance. This references the selection criteria in relation to Schedule 3 of the Regulations. This criteria which must be taken into account in determining whether a development is likely to have significant effects on the environment. The criteria is as follows:

- I. Characteristics of Development (e.g. its size, use of natural resources, quantities of pollution and waste generated);
- II. Location of Development (e.g. environmental sensitivity of geographical areas);
- III. Characteristics of the potential impact (e.g. its magnitude and duration).

Below is a consideration as to whether an EIA is required to support this planning application for the above development.

CONTEXT AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The site is 3.08 hectares in size and comprises of a mixture of both previously developed land and grass playing pitches. The main Hough End Leisure Centre building extends to around 3080 sqm. The site is surrounded by other grass playing pitches and other soft landscaping and trees, to the east of the site is lies Princess Road a main arterial north south route .

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is not subject to any environmental designations. There are no listed buildings located within the site boundary, nor is the site located within or adjacent to a Conservation Area. The site is not subject to any statutory landscape designations, such as SSSIs, SACs etc.

A ground investigation, risk assessment and remediation strategy report has been submitted alongside the application, which confirms that the site is of generally low-low moderate (localised) risk for contamination. Controlled water contamination is also considered to be a low risk as no significant source of mobile contamination was anticipated.

The submitted noise assessment indicates that the proposals would not give rise to adverse noise impacts on nearby residential area.

The submitted ecology survey indicates that the site is of limited value to wildlife although the wider playing fields and woodland areas are of greater biodiversity interest.

It is considered that the potential impacts from a development of this nature are as follows:

- Visual/landscape character;
- Traffic and access;
- Air quality and pollution;
- Use of resources including water;
- Creation of waste;
- Land contamination; and
- Noise/dust/emissions from construction and occupation of the development;

This assessment will determine whether any of the above impacts are significant in nature and warrant consideration by an EIA.

ASSESSMENT

As detailed above, an assessment will now take place based on the three criteria within Schedule 3 of the regulations.

Characteristics of Development

Size of Development

The application submission makes it clear that the proposals include the erection of a two storey extension to the existing leisure centre, installation of two number 3G artificial turf pitches with associated floodlighting and fencing, and car parking following demolition of the existing changing pavilion.

It is not considered that the proposed development would involve any significant intensification of land and the characteristics of the development would not have a significant urbanising effect, with the site being located in a part of urban Manchester and part of the site having been developed and used as an leisure centre. The area of 3G pitches are currently marked out as grass pitches for recreational use, the use of which would continue after the development. Whilst it is acknowledged that the installation of an artificial turf pitch would enable greater use of the land it would remain in recreational use and any impacts would be localised.

The site lies adjacent to existing areas of recreational space and buildings, and the Princess Road arterial route. Residential areas are located to the north and east of the site. The proposals would be of a type and scale consistent with other uses in the wider area.

On this basis, whilst a proposal of this scale and nature would have some impacts it is considered that this would not be of more than local significance and would not be of a scale of warrant consideration by an EIA.

Cumulation with other development

A screening opinion should be adopted on its own merits, and on the basis of what is being proposed, however, in judging whether the effects of a development are likely to be significant, regard should be had to the possible cumulative effects with any existing or approved development.

Other recent developments in the area are related to educational use to the west at Chorlton High School, and commercial, education and residential developments to the south-east. There are some limited other opportunities for development elsewhere to the south-east although no planning applications have been submitted at the current time. There is likely to be some cumulative impacts in relation to traffic, noise and air quality during the construction phase. However, these impacts are considered to be predictable and localised in nature and can be suitably mitigated through careful management of the highway network during this time.

It is noted that the proposals are part of wider efforts to improve outdoor playing pitches at the site and that qualitative works to existing grass pitches are to be undertaken to bring them up to appropriate standards and best practice. These improvement works would result in the retained playing fields accommodating the following pitches:

- 2 No. standard full size 3G artificial grass football pitches
- 14 No. senior grass football pitches
- 2 No. mini soccer grass football pitches
- 2 No. Senior Gaelic grass football pitches
- 6 No. Senior Rugby grass football pitches
- 2 No. Non-Turf Cricket Wickets
- Air Model Craft area

In terms of the operational phases of the development, it is considered that the impacts would not be significant.

Use of natural resources

The site is not known to contain any natural resources. The impact of the design and construction of the scheme in terms of natural resources should be considered as part of a holistic approach to sustainability. It is anticipated that the sourcing, manufacturing and transportation of construction materials would minimise impacts as part of this approach.

It is therefore considered the use of natural resources would not be significant in respect of this development and therefore does not warrant consideration by an EIA.

Production of waste

Developments of this scale would inevitably create waste both in the construction and operational phases of the development.

The proposed development will generate waste during the demolition and construction phase and once occupied. Demolition and construction waste would need to be suitably managed in accordance with best practice.

Once complete, the proposed development would generate commercial municipal waste, for which the method of treatment is commonplace and which would not give rise to potential significant effects. The development would be operated in accordance with a management strategy. The production of waste would, therefore, not be significant, localised in nature and predictable and therefore does not require consideration by an EIA.

The disposal of materials associated with the 3G all-weather pitches at end-of-life is unknown at the current time and it is anticipated that the life span of materials would require replacement of the surface and disposal of the pitch at some point in the future. Given the make up of the pitch and to ensure the safe and most responsible disposal of the surface it would be considered reasonable that a condition of any planning approval would look to mitigate such impacts to ensure the most sustainable and safe disposal of the materials is undertaken at that point in the future.

Pollution and nuisances

The construction phase of the scheme would produce dust, noise and vibrations from the works and use of machinery. Additional traffic will be present on the highway network from construction vehicles, particularly heavy goods vehicles, resulting in noise and emissions in the immediate area which would give rise to disruption to local residents and businesses for the duration of the construction period. Construction noise could be appropriately mitigated through the use of noise dampening or silencing equipment. Restrictions and management plan requirements can all be secured and contained in a Construction Management Plan.

The site is located adjacent the Greater Manchester Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declared by Manchester City Council due to exceedances of the annual mean Air Quality Objective for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).

During construction there is the potential for dust emissions and exhaust emissions from machinery/vehicles however these would be temporary short-term impacts. Any impacts would be managed in accordance with standard best practice measures, and is not anticipated to generate significant adverse effects. The completed development has the potential to give rise to additional vehicular traffic movements to and from the development and measures to mitigate such impacts would be required including through effective travel planning, cycle parking, electric vehicle charging points on site as set out within the planning application documents.

The use of floodlights has the potential to cause nuisance and disturbance and adequate mitigation in the form of hours of use and ensuring light is directed to the pitches and avoid light spillage into the wider environment would need to be considered.

As such, it is not considered that such impacts are significant or of a scale which is more than local significance and therefore do not warrant consideration as part of an EIA.

Risk of accidents

The main risks in terms of a development of this nature are the contamination of land and/or water from spillages and leak. However, it is not considered that the construction or the operational stages of the development pose a significant risk in this regard given the existing conditions at the site and the substances that are likely to be used, particularly in the construction process.

The area is not considered to be environmentally sensitive and it is considered that given the scale and nature of the development, such impacts are not likely to be of more than local significance, short in duration and predictable. In addition, the development is not likely to give rise to any risks to human health from dangerous substances.

Visual Effects

The site does not contain any statutory or non-statutory listed buildings and is also not within a conservation area or a designated sensitive location. Whilst there are open views across the wider site and playing fields given the location of the site and the scope of the proposals it is not considered that impacts on visual amenity would be so significant that would warrant the preparation of an EIA.

Location of development

Existing land use

The site comprises part previously developed and part grassed playing fields. The land is not environmentally sensitive. The application is supported by ecological surveys that identify the application site as having limited value to wildlife, although the wider playing fields and woodland areas have a greater biodiversity interest.

There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on the site and it is located within flood zone 1 '*low risk to flooding*'. The scheme is not expected to have an impact on local sources of flooding.

Whilst it has been identified that the site is of generally low-low moderate (localised) risk for contamination it is considered that such contamination does not warrant consideration by an EIA on this basis given that the contamination levels are not expected to be significant beyond what would be reasonably expected on a site such as this.

Relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area

The site is not known to contain any natural resources that would be affected by the development.

Absorption capacity of the natural environment

The site contains no areas of statutory nature conservation and there are no such sites within the immediate vicinity of the Site. The site is separated from the nearest SBIs by urban development, and it is considered unlikely that the proposed development of the site will have any significant adverse effects on the designated interests of the SBI.

The proposal would not physically affect heritage assets through its demolition, construction, operation or decommissioning and it is not envisaged that the effects on townscape character would be significant.

The wider area is identified as having a greater biodiversity interest than the application site which comprises of amenity grassland and buildings. Given the nature of the site the ecological survey indicates that protected species would not be detrimentally affected by the proposals.

Overall, it is considered that the impacts on the natural environment would be of no more than local significance and the impacts from the construction phase can be carefully managed to minimise any impacts on any nearby sensitive receptors. On that basis the development is unlikely to give rise to any significant impacts and therefore consideration by an EIA is not considered necessary.

Characteristics of the potential impact

There would be no transfrontier impact as a result of the development and impacts of the development are local in nature, not complex and are predictable and well understood.

The implementation of the proposed development, would result in a permanent change to the appearance of the area which would only be reversed if the development were to be removed. The visual impacts of the new development, particularly from its scale, would alter the visual amenity of the area and how the site is viewed in the local area. However, it is considered that such changes are of no more than local significance with the works proposed reflecting the scale and form and materiality of buildings in the local area.

The development is not considered to be located in a sensitive area and the form of the works responds to the scale of the developments in the surrounding area. As such, the development would not result in any significant impacts that are of more than local significance that would therefore warrant consideration by an EIA.

There would be noise, vibrations and traffic from the construction and operational phases of the development. However, these impacts are not of a magnitude of more than local significance and therefore do not warrant consideration by an EIA.

In terms of the duration, frequency and reversibility of the impacts, it is acknowledged that the scale of the construction activity, along with the operational phases, would have a local impact on the area. However, the construction activities would be short term, predictable and temporary in nature. When the development is complete there would be a permanent change in the visual amenity of the area in the vicinity of the site which could only be reversed if the development were removed.

On that basis, it is not considered that impacts from the development would be of more than local significance and therefore do not require consideration by an EIA.

Paragraph 58 of Appendix 2 of the NPPG (Screening Checklist)

Paragraph 58, contained within appendix 2 of the NPPG, provides a screening checklist as to which types of cases in which an EIA is more likely to be required for particular types of developments.

This goes on to state that an EIA is unlikely to be required for the redevelopment of land unless the new development is on a significant greater scale than the previous use, or the types of impact are of a markedly different nature or there is a high level of contamination.

For sites which have not previously been intensively developed the following criteria is relevant:

- (i) area of the scheme is more than 5 hectares; or
- (ii) it would provide a total of more than 10,000 m² of new commercial floorspace; or
- (iii) the development would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings).

Given that the site is located within an urbanised area of Manchester the proposed development is not of a type where impacts are of a markedly different nature or there is a high level of contamination.

Mitigation if development is not EIA development 'General Provisions relating to Screenings' Under Part 2 Regulation 5

Regulation 5 (5) (b) and paragraph 18 of the NPPG states "if it is determined that proposed development is not EIA development, state any features of the proposed development and measures envisaged to avoid, or prevent what might otherwise have been, significant adverse effects on the environment".

As detailed above it is considered that the potential impacts from a development of this nature are as follows:

- Visual/landscape character;
- Traffic and access;
- Air quality and pollution;
- Use of resources including water;
- Creation of waste;
- Land contamination;
- Noise/dust/emissions from construction and operations of the development; and
- Cumulative impacts.

It is considered that whilst there would be some environmental impacts associated with the works, these can be suitably mitigated against. This is detailed below:

- Traffic and access – The development is not considered to give rise to significant impacts on traffic and transport and matters relating to impacts from construction vehicles can be mitigated through the submission of a Construction Management Plan and during the operational phase through travel planning.
- Visual /Landscape character- The development would remove an area of open grass playing field and the erection of an extension to the existing building. Impacts are likely to be localised, mitigation in the form of additional landscaped

areas within the site such as tree planting and other enhancements would need to be considered.

- Air quality and pollution – There are likely to be impacts on air quality during the construction phases of the development. There are likely to be short term impacts during the construction which can be suitably mitigated against during the construction through a CMP. Longer term impacts from the occupation of the site may arise due to increases in vehicle movements to and from the site, lighting impacts and measures to address matters will need to be considered.
- Use of resources including water – The proposal would not utilise any resources which are in short supply. Measures can be adopted during the construction phase to minimise the impact on resources being used in a sustainable manner such as water and the choice of materials to ensure that impacts from the sourcing, manufacturing and transportation of these is minimised.
- Creation of waste – The proposal would create a degree of waste. Through careful waste management arrangements during the course of the proposal, the impacts of waste generation can be minimised which should also include efforts to recycle waste. In addition, through its operational phase this would be subject to a waste management strategy submitted alongside any planning application. Mitigation in the form of a strategy for the safe disposal of 3G artificial turf pitches to ensure the most suitable form of disposal of materials at the end of their life span will need to be considered.
- Land contamination – The land is not identified as being complex in this regard. Provided that soil and waste is deposited and treated in accordance with relevant regulations this should minimise any effects in this regard.
- Noise – During the construction phase the development is likely to generate a degree of disturbance from comings and goings in the local area. These effects can be minimised and through a CMP which looks at the timetabling of construction vehicles, activities and use of machinery. The operational phase is not considered to give rise to specific or significant impacts with regards to noise. The development would be expected to include suitable mitigation to ensure future occupiers were protected from the noise environment in which it is located.
- Cumulative impacts – The development site is not located in an area of significant change or where there are likely to be other developments taking place in close proximity to each other.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that this development would have some impact on the surrounding area. However, it has been judged that these would not be significant to warrant a formal Environmental Impact Assessment. Therefore, the opinion of the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, is that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required in this instance.

This screening opinion relates to the requirements of an Environmental Impact Assessment only.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D W Jones', is displayed on a light gray rectangular background.

Derek Jones

Planning Section Manager

Manchester City Council

8th March 2022